help improve primary health care in India starting with pilot projects in two or more States. Funds will be provided by the Government of India, State Governments concerned and AAPI. The MoU will be implemented in a time bound manner.

Voting Rights to NRIs and PIOs

1827. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplating to allow NRIs and PIOs to enroll themselves in electoral rolls and exercise voting right in various elections in India, including Parliamentary and Assembly elections, and

(b) if so, the details in this regard, with details of the criteria laid down for such enrolment and the number of NRIs and PIOs from different countries likely to avail this privilege, country-wise?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) Yes. A Proposal for giving voting rights to Indian citizens only (not PIOs) who are away from their place of residence on account of employment, education or otherwise has been approved by the Government. A Bill in this regard has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 28th February, 2006.

Development of Panchayati Raj Institutions

1828. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether any new method have been proposed in the last five years to further develop Panchayati Raj Institution;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Prior to the setting up of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, the Ministry of Rural Development was the nodal Ministry for Panchayati Raj Institutions. A Conference of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj was held on 11th July 2001 at New Delhi to discuss the measures to be taken to devolve functions and powers in accordance with the provisions of the